

Why Not?

In Alexandria they have a little bit of real "domestic violence," although Governor KEMPER has not called upon Mr. HAYES to put it down. There seem to be two Superintendents of Police in that ancient bazaar; and the people there are no little disquieted thereat. In fact, a telegram from Washington to Alexandria threatens that old town with the Federal "military."

We quote it: "It is whispered" in military circles that an emergency may arise just across the river, in Virginia, which may require the intervention of the military, in which case the troops recently here may be ordered to Alexandria to adjust the existing "imbroglio." Should the S. of P. be imprisoned it is probable a "call" will be made.

The custody of the chain-gang appears to be involved in this "imbroglio." We read of proceedings here and proceedings there, all within the city of Alexandria, of course, in connection with this important affair. Evidently the public peace is threatened. Why has not Mr. HAYES deemed it his duty to "preserve the peace"? It is a good deal nearer to Alexandria than our Government is, and incomparably nearer than he is to New Orleans. He claims the right to station soldiers in New Orleans to "preserve the peace," and this whether Governor NICOLLS wants them there or not. Now, we "want to know, you know," why he doesn't manifest a like anxiety in regard to the peace of the venerable city of Alexandria? Why doesn't he consider it his duty to police that city?

But we shall be told that it is the President's duty to see that the negroes are protected in their rights in Louisiana. Very well. It is equally his duty, then, to protect the whites of Massachusetts in their rights; and therefore we call his attention to the following paragraph:

The Springfield Republican admits the existence of abuses at the Westborough Reform School. It apologetically remarks that the worst case of strapping was inflicted by a temporary officer. It concedes that the offenders, as a means of punishment of single boys, is a questionable resort. It explains that "the school-box is a narrow closet or upright coffin, into which the offender steps with his arms by his sides, and which is only large enough for his body standing in that position. The box is closed behind him, the box is open at the top, and there is a small lattice opposite his face to give passage to the breath. Swearing is occasioned by the exhaustion of the unchangeable position."

"How to a French citizen, CASPAR!" The flogging, the ducking with water, the sweating in a box, of American citizens! Suppose they had been Louisiana negroes. Come, Mr. HAYES, let us know the length of your tether. If you can find warrant in the Constitution for stationing troops in Louisiana in spite of the protest of Governor NICOLLS, "to preserve the peace" and "protect" your much-beloved freedmen, why can you not do as much for Massachusetts white boys? These white boys are superior in every respect to the Louisiana negroes. We say the President is right in not undertaking to "protect" the citizens of Massachusetts in their "rights," and right in not troubling himself to "preserve the peace" in Alexandria; but undoubtedly wrong in undertaking to "protect" the negroes and "preserve the peace" in Louisiana.

The Tobacco Laws.

If the idea of our correspondent "Shoe-koe Ship" be the true one as to the operation of the act of Assembly published by us last Saturday, which act repeals all laws on the subject of the sale and inspection of tobacco that were in force on the 1st day of January last, then the Governor cannot too soon consider the question of convening the Legislature in extra session. The theory of biennial sessions appears ludicrous in this connection. It would be so wise to wait two years before righting such a wrong as seems to have been done by the Legislature at its late session. If the act had repealed only such laws as are inconsistent with itself, there would be no trouble; and we must think that such was the intention of the General Assembly; but intentions go for nothing in the presence of the unambiguous language of the act. We quote it:

1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That chapter 53 of the Code of Virginia, edition of 1873; chapter 141 of the Acts of Assembly of 1866-67; chapters 75 and 375 of the Acts of Assembly of 1872-73; chapters 156, 180, and 228 of the Acts of Assembly of 1874; and all other acts and parts of acts relating to the inspection of tobacco warehouse charges, in force on the first day of January, 1877, be, and the same are hereby repealed.

2. And be it further enacted, That the subject of the sampling and sale of tobacco and warehouse charges shall be hereafter subject to the provisions of this act.

There is no mistaking this language, and no way of construing it so as to make it mean what we have said the Legislature doubtless intended it to mean. All laws which were in force on the 1st of January last on the subject of the inspection of tobacco are repealed, and "the sampling and sale of tobacco and warehouse charges shall be hereafter" — that is to say, from this day, or from the day the act was passed — "subject to the provisions of this act." There seems to be no escape from the conclusion that a careless Legislature has done a very foolish thing.

But no impracticable law can be executed in a community in which public opinion does not approve the law, nor wish it to be executed. That is to say, such a law in such a community becomes a dead letter. This affords us a good illustration — and we will avail ourselves of it, though not writing on the subject of the difference between home-rule, such as we have in Virginia, and rule from Washington, such as they have in Louisiana. The law before us, if a Federal law, would be executed in the most rigid manner possible by the Federal officials. The pickings would be equal to what they used to be under the internal-revenue laws. But as a Virginia law, to be executed by Virginia officials and enforced upon men who have no wish to violate any law, but who could not comply with the terms of this one, it could not be so executed as to oppress our citizens. It would, we repeat, become a dead letter. It will be for the Governor to decide whether it would be better to allow the State to do without any law until next winter or to convene the General Assembly in extra session.

The sale of a whole village is something worth mentioning. See the letter from Gloucester Courthouse in another column.

If it had happened on the 20th of March instead of the 9th of April, what a fine equinoctial storm we could boast of.

On the Chicago Times there are employed, in the editorial department, 16; reporters, 15; counting-room, 6; mailing-room, 13;

press-room, 10; stereotypers-room, 8; correspondents, 300; composition-room, 108; total, 481.

The Times has pneumatic tubes connecting its office with the telegraphic office.

At the municipal-reform meeting held in New York on Friday night, Hon. WILLIAM M. EVARTS made a short speech, in which he alluded to Governor THURMAN's action in recommending the appointment of a commission, and spoke in very flattering terms of the views of the Governor on the subject, and said if amendments were adopted to Governor THURMAN alone belonged all credit and praise.

Tobacco and Tobacco Laws.

A striking exemplification of the results of hasty and ill-considered legislation is afforded by the tobacco bill lately put forth by the Legislature, approved by the Governor, and declared to be not the law of the land. But what a lesson! The bill contained good features that must commend themselves alike to the farmers and to the trade, but it was so incongruous and inconsistent as to destroy its usefulness by lack of vitality to put it into effect. Set it upon its legs, then, supply the motive power, and it may work pretty well; but these essential features, as it stands it must fall. By the ax it is applied to the root, and all previous legislation on the subject of tobacco is swept away — every statute and enactment remaining in force up to the 1st of January, 1877, is repealed, and the law of the land declares that the sale of all tobacco and that warehouse charges shall be hereafter subject to the provisions of this act. Startling as it may be, the fact stands prominently forth that there is not left in the State of Virginia one single tobacco inspector, nor, by consequence, the warehouse in all the fifty sections of the bill the term "inspector" does not once occur. The inspector is abrogated, and consequently the institution of a public warehouse is abolished — at least temporarily, if not altogether. What have we instead? The act makes provision, but, unfortunately, only for the distant future; for the first term it is to impart existence and give vitality to it is found in section 4, which requires the Governor, in January, 1878, to appoint two samplers, whose term of office shall commence on the 1st day of October next succeeding. Now, what is to be done? In the meantime what is to be done? It is a stand still and dangerous to go forward, for this new law bristles conspicuously with fines, forfeitures, and assessments for violation and non-observance of its provisions, and offers tempting rewards to informers for the violation of its provisions. For instance, a commission merchant, for each offence, on a penalty of \$20 for each offence, to store all tobacco consigned to him in a public warehouse not duly instructed in writing, at the time of shipment, to the warehouse. We have no public warehouses. What, then, shall we do with the hundreds of hogheads daily arriving without instructions? The consignees find themselves greatly embarrassed. Admit, though, that the houses formerly styled public may still be so called; put the tobacco in them, and what then? The act expressly declares that it shall be the duty of the tobacco warehouse to be a sample unless the sample is drawn and certified by a sampler appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Unquestionably no such officer as yet exists, nor by the provisions of the bill can until next October.

There are other peculiarities and embarrassments attending this grand piece of legislation, but enough have been pointed out, and we pause for a solution of them, though we can ill afford to "bide our time."

Ante-Bellum Claims for Transporting Mails, &c.

WASHINGTON, April 7, 1877. To the Editors of the Dispatch, Richmond, Va.

Sirs, — At the suggestion of ex-Governor Smith I send a copy of the Post-Office Gazette, containing the correspondence between three prominent officials in relation to the settlement of the ante-bellum claims (so called) on the United States for the transportation of the mails, &c. Inquiries from Virginia and other States are coming to me by every mail for information as to when said claims will be paid, &c. It has occurred to me that by transferring the correspondence referred to to the columns of the Dispatch it would confer a special favor on interested parties. It might be well to suggest to claimants to wait for further instructions from the department before assigning or otherwise disposing of their claims.

I am yours, very respectfully, WILLIAM BELLE.

The correspondence is long, and uninteresting except as to the conclusion reached, which we will state. At its last session Congress passed the following law: "That the sum of \$375,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, be appropriated to pay the amount due to mail contractors for mail service performed in the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, and West Virginia, in the years 1850, 1851, and 1852, and before said States respectively engaged in war against the United States; and the provisions of 3,480 of the Revised Statutes of the United States shall not be applicable to the payments hereunder authorized. Provided, That any such claims which have been paid by the Confederate States Government shall not be again paid."

The question naturally arose, "When did those States respectively engage in war against the United States?" The Solicitor for the Treasury answers: "The date of the act of secession is the date to which payment can be made under the provisions of this statute."

The Crisis in South Carolina.

THE PROBLEM OF THE HOUR — CHAMBERLAIN'S NEW PROGRAMME — RESISTANCE TO HAMPTON'S AUTHORITY — WHAT THE REPUBLICANS SAY ABOUT IT. (Special dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.)

COLUMBIA, S. C., April 8. — The problem of the hour here is the course to be taken by Chamberlain after the soldiers leave the State-House. The statement he gave to the Associated Press last night is not considered final, for Chamberlain has developed wonderful facility for changing his mind and for baffling public expectations. His present object seems to be to sustain the spirits of his discouraged partisans. Most of these are now insisting with great earnestness upon their extremely moderate republicanism in times past, and if they cannot be said to talk Hampton out, they certainly squint strongly in that direction. They express great dissatisfaction with Governor HAMPTON's address, and equal confidence in his intentions and ability to carry out his repeated promises and pledges. They say that if he means all he says he is as much Republican as Democrat, or at least Republican enough for all practical purposes.

Republicans, however, no less than Democrats, are waiting to see what Mr. Chamberlain's next move will be, and much of his following and influence among his late constituents will depend upon that move. If they suspect that he is working for his own immediate or future interest he will lose confidence, and that suspicion he tries to allay by repeated declarations that what he does and will do is solely for the sake of the party. It is pretty well settled that he does not propose to vacate his place until forced to do so, and in this determination he will certainly be supported by all of his secretaries, and the members of the Executive Board who elected him, and who are morally bound to see him through the difficulty in which they so largely contributed to involve him. Their position is in brief that the removal of troops simply leaves matters where they are, and hence found them, and that the threat of the light in this State

must be taken up just there and followed out to the hilt, unless the light is inaugurated in the Supreme Court last fall. It is need, less to say that the Hampton programme, the details of which are kept very close, does not coincide with the expectations of Chamberlain's supporters. The pledges given to the President, however, will be kept to the letter.

Louisiana.

THE PACKARD CHOWD MAKING A DEAD SET FOR THE COMMISSION — WARMOTH'S APPEAL TO HIS COLORED COLLEAGUES — HE ADVISES SURRENDER — THE STATE-HOUSE GUARDED — WORK OF THE COMMISSION.

[Special dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.] NEW ORLEANS, April 8. — Packard's crowd have misused the word "commission," and have been arguing with the commission day and night. They lay all stress upon the legal points of their case. Packard has also been talking very hard to make some impression of authority for the benefit of the commission, but he has succeeded in doing much more of his officials to do much more than poke their noses out of the windows of the State-House.

In the secret-session of the Packard Legislature yesterday Warmoth made a speech to the colored members, and told them the jig was up, that they must take the best terms they could. A member of Packard's Legislature told me to-day that they had not received a single dollar of pay, and could get nothing for their warrants.

Beast Butler on the Situation. (Correspondence of the New York Herald.) WASHINGTON, April 7, 1877. B. F. Butler has been in the city for the last two weeks, and is doing business in the local courts and before the departments. For some days past there has been a rumor that he and Senator Blaine have agreed to forgive and forget their old-time battles, political animosity and bitterness, and the other in the Senate and the other in the House lead the Radical Republican revolt against the policy of the Administration in regard to the southern States. A representative of the Herald called upon General Butler last evening, when the Massachusetts statesman gave some of his ideas on the political situation.

After a few minutes' pause and some vigorous puffs of his cigar, General Butler said: "I would you like to hear from the Bible of this Louisiana commission business?" Laying down his cigar, the General took from a small book-case near his desk an edition of the Bible, and after fumbling over it for some time, read, with an indescribably humorous facial expression, the following:

And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. "How I should like," said he, "to preach a sermon on that text as applied to the Administration in Parson Snodgrass's case!"

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